POETRY.

Written for The Progressive Farmer.]

IT MIGHT BE WORSE.

Consolatory Philosophy for Unfortunate Mortals

Should fate deal hardly with you when you need
her kindest smiles,
And smashes all your fondest dreams to raise
your angry bile,
And seems to take a pleasure thwarting all you
try to do,
Just wear a smile and think you're blest with
what it makes you rue—
It might be worse.

When your sweetheart has gone back on you,
whom you've loved for years
And who has been so sweet and kind you entertained no fears
The other fellow would supplant you in her
heart and mind
Don't tear your hair because she's gone and left
you thus behind—
It might be worse.

Should you buy a horse that was represented to be sound
And found him spavined ring-boned, and a
balker, side-sound
A wind sucker, and fifteen years of age instead
of four,
Don't get mad with the chap who sucked you
in, and cuss and roar—
It might be worse.

When crops are bad and corn and 'taters all are
killed by drought,
And should a fire come and burn you boddaciously out,
And sickness sweep your wife and children off
the face of the earth,
Don't wish that you were dead, but thank the
Lord who gave you birth—
It might be worse.

If you are sinful and you try your best to change
your life
So that you'll be prepared when'er you leave
this earthly strife,
But, after all your efforts, luckless, to the devil
go,
Don't wince because you're hot and cannot
stand the fire's glow—
It might be worse.

No matter what your prospects are, nor what
your luck may be,
Always tote a smiling face that shows you are
from trouble free;
No matter what the scourge may be o'er helpless
life to roll,
Don't be like Job and let the iron enter in your
soul—
It might be worse.

I could go on and mention mortal woes ad infinitum,
But what I've stated are enough to teach you
how to fight 'em,
So my philosophy I'll end by saying, you will
find
Due consolation in all trials if you'll bear in
mind—
They might be worse.

U. B GWYNN.

HOUSEHOLD.

HONEY FRUIT CAKE.

Four eggs, five cups of flour, two cups of honey, one cup of butter, one cup of sweet milk, two teaspoonfuls of cream of tartar, one teaspoonful of soda, one pound of raisins, one pound of currants, half a pound of citron, one teaspoonful each of cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg Bake in a slow oven. This cake will keep a long time.

BROWN BETTY.

Butter a deep pudding dish, and place a layer of finely chopped apples in the bottom; then add a layer of very fine bread crumbs, sprinkle with sugar and spice; add a little butter, then an other layer of apples, and so on until the dish is filled. The top layer should be of the crumbs seasoned to taste. Bake in a moderate oven until quite brown, and serve while hot, either with sweetened cream or hard sauce.

MUSHROOM SALAD.

A mushroom salad is thought to be a great treat by many, and is particularly nice to serve with cold game. Cut the mushrooms into small pieces and cook them in a little olive oil, letting them simmer fifteen minutes. Add some lemon juice, and stand them on one side until cold. Place the cold mushrooms in a salad bowl, and season with salt and pepper, some chopped parsley and a suspicion of onion juice. Cover the whole with a mayonnaise dressing, and it is ready to serve.

OYSTERS IN A LOAF.

A much relished way to serve oysters is to cut the top off a freshly baked loaf of bread, remove the sponge, and fill the cavity with creamed oysters, put in layers, with intervening layers of bread crumbs. When full replace the top of the loaf, cover the latter with the beaten yolk of an egg, and set it in the oven to glaze. This makes a pretty dish if served on a wreath of parsley, placed on the dish with their stems turned in, so that the loaf will conceal all but the leaves.

SAGO AND CLARET SOUP.

A cold soup that is both nutritious and stimulating is made from sago and claret. Take four ounces of sago, wash it thoroughly, put it in half a gallon of cold water. Cook it slowly until it is transparent. Add to it eight ounces of granulated sugar, stir until disolved, and season with a dash of nutmeg, a dash of red pepper and a level teaspoonful of salt. Remove from the fire, and a bottle of good claret wine. Mix, and if too thick, thin with cold water until the right consistency for the cream soup, which you will remember should be like thin cream, or so that it will just mash with the spoon. This is a very nice soup for an eleven o'clock breakfast if given on a very hot day.

ALLEGED FUN.

Justice: "You are charged with stealing Colonel Julep's chickens. Have you any witnesses?" Uncle Moses: "I neb not. I don't steal chickens befor' witnesses."—Modes and Fabrics.

Little Benny: "Mamma, please let me hold the baby for a minute." Mother: "I'm afraid, Benny, you might let her fall." Little Benny: "Well, if she does fall she can't fall very far."—Texas Sifter.

The Chaplain's Story.

Jim Bourn and I were boys together at Westminster. We went to Oxford together—to Balliol; we took our degrees together in the Classical (Honors) School, and were ordained together by the Bishop of L——, as curates for his diocese. Here our paths separated for some years, and when next we renewed our old friendship I was the vicar of the town, still single at thirty four, and Jim was the chaplain of the famous jail in the same town, and married.

We were talking in my study, as in olden times. Somehow the conversation drifted to the subject of a recent newspaper article: "Ought Married People to Have Any Secrets From Each Other?" I said "No," Jim said "Yes." We both smilingly stuck to our text. It was not often that we differed in opinion, but this was one case, anyhow.

"Why, Jim," said I, "you would have been the last person I should have expected to take that line, for I am sure, from what I have seen, that if ever two folks were happy and loving, they are Ellen and yourself. I can't conceive of you having any secrets which you would not wish Ella to know."

"Ah!" retorted he, with a peculiar smile, that's just it. Well, Howson, I'll tell you one, if you like, though," he added; "it must remain a secret between us two. I have never spoken of it to any one in the world, and never shall, except to yourself."

"Thanks, Jim, you need not fear me, as you know. I am only curious to know the case," and I assumed an attitude of eager attention to Jim's story.

"I was the chaplain at Lowmarket, as you are well aware, before I came here. It is a pretty place, and one wonders whatever made the Government build a jail there. However, there it is, and there was I. The amount of society that one got in Lowmarket was perfectly astonishing. Had I had the time and inclination for it, I might have turned out a regular 'society' clergyman. As it was, I had a full amount of lectures, soirees, parties and entertainments. Among the people I got in with none were nicer than the Yorks. Miss York, a maiden lady of fifty, lived in a large and beautifully furnished house, called 'The Cedars,' in the best part of the town. She was known all over the district for her charity, kindness of heart and pure life. Everybody had a good word for her. Nor was her niece, Miss York, any less popular. People in Lowmarket fairly worshiped both of them.

"I was twenty eight when I first saw Ella York, and at once succumbed to her charms. For weeks her praise had been in my ears, and now, on acquaintance, I found her beauty, her manner, her kindness of heart, not one whit less than report stated. I loved her. Of course I could not say so at once; and whether, after two or three meetings in the course of my work—for Miss York, the elder, took great interest in our sphere of labor—she guessed my love, and reciprocated it, I could not then say. I found, upon judicious, inquiry that Miss York—Ella—had lived with her aunt from childhood; that she was now twenty-four; that her mother was dead and her father lived on the Continent for his health; also that she was her aunt's sole heiress. These facts were of course only learned by degrees, as one cannot go to the fountain head for such information.

"After much heart searching and debating within myself I thought I saw that Ella York was not wholly indifferent to me, and I resolved to ask her to be my wife. I need not go into details as to how I did it, beyond saying that it was one summer morning rather more than five years ago, when, having gone to see her aunt, who was out, I met Ella in the grounds; and after talking as we walked along on various subjects, somehow it came out unexpectedly, and almost before I could comprehend what it all meant Ella York had promise to be my wife, subject to her aunt's consent.

"But her aunt didn't consent. I received a dainty note that night—how tenderly I regarded it, Howson!—from Ella, saying that she had spoken of my visit to her aunt, and had told her I was coming to morrow for her approval; Miss York had been very kind, but acted rather strangely, and said she would see me, but she could not consent, as she did not wish to lose Ella. My dear girl went on to say that she had in vain tried to get from her any more than this.

"I was in a curious frame of mind as I went next morning to see Miss York. What could her object really be? Surely not to me! My position, my family, my life here were, I hoped, beyond reproach. Even if it were a question of money, I had enough private means, as you know. As for Miss York, well, of course it would be lonely without Ella at first, after so many years' companionship, but surely she didnt expect her never to get married! It was preposterous.

"I was destined to know her objection. As I approached the lodge the porteress met me.

"'Oh, Mr. Bourn, this is shockin!' Why my engagement to Ella should be 'shocking' I couldn't see, and I no doubt expressed it in my looks.

"'So sudden, too sir,' said the woman. 'Nobody expected it!'

"'Whaever's the matter?' said I.

"'Why, haven't you heard that Miss York is dead? No! Oh, dear! Poor thing; had a fit in the night, doctor says. was quite unconscious when Miss Ella got there, and died at 9 o'clock this morning.'

"My heart sank; I felt faint and giddy. It was some minutes before I could move. You will never know how it feels, Howson, unless you should have such a blow, which I hope you never will. But I am bound to say that my one thought was 'my poor, lonely darling, Ella!'

"There were no more details to be learned about Miss York's death. She was buried in Lowmarket churchyard. Ella was ill for weeks, and could not see even me. When she was well enough to attend to business it was found that she inherited all her aunt's money, and as she had already accepted me, we were married twelve months afterward. She had been awfully lonely, she said, since Miss York's death, but no couple had ever lived happier and been nearer and dearer to each other than Ella and I. May God bless her!"

"Amen!" said I, solemnly and reverently.

"Ella and I," pursued Jim, "could never give the remotest guess as to her aunt's objection to our engagement, and it would probably have remained a mystery to me, as it has to Ella even now, had it not been for the following circumstances. Sometime ago I was sent for at the prison to see a rather desperate character, whose end was very near. He had been sent to seven years' penal servitude some three years before for forgery, and after serving three years at Portland had been transferred to Lownmarket. His appearance was superior to that of the ordinary convict, even when a forger. Although I had seen him several times, and certainly been struck with his face and appearance, we could not be said to be friendly, as he had been indifferent to all my advances

"I found him lying in the hospital, and I soon saw that he would not live very long.

"'You seem pleased to see me?' I said.

"'Yes, sir,' replied No. 152; 'I'm glad you've come; I hardly expected you would, considering how standoffin I've been. But I wanted to see you, as the doctor says I'm not likely to last much longer—perhaps not till to morrow.'

"'There, well, never mind. Keep your courage up, and you'll probably deceive the doctor.'

"I talked to him about his soul and spiritual things. That we may pass by, Howson; I believe he was thoroughly penitent. I asked him if there was anything I could do for him.

"'Yes, sir, there is one thing, if you will. It's such a curious one, I hardly like to ask.' His eyes looked eagerly at me.

"'Go on,' I said; 'I'll do it if possible.'

"'I've had a queer life, sir,' said the convict. 'I might have been somebody and done some good; but I got led astray after marriage, and broke the heart of my wife, who died soon afterward. Yes, I've led a bad life, and its precious few friends I've had lately anyhow. But I hope I may be for given, as you say God will pardon even the worst of us. And if you'll promise me to do one thing when I'm dead, I shall die happy.'

"'I'll promise as far as I can,' I said; 'what is it?'

"'It's to take good care of your wife,' answered No. 152 'Ah!' said he, 'smiling, 'I thought that would astonish you!'

"'Take care of my wife!' I gazed at him in amazement. 'Why, of course I shall! But what is that to you?'

"'A great deal," he said?

"'Why?'

"'Because she's—my daughter!'

"I looked at him in terror and astonishment, and was about to send for the nurse and for the doctor, feeling sure he was rambling, when he said slowly:

"'Sit down, please; I can't talk much longer. You need not send for Dr. Dalton; I'm all right. I feared it would give you a shock, sir, as it gave me one the first time I saw her here with you. Ella York—you see I know her name all right—was taken when quite a child by her aunt, who disowned me, and never told the child what her father was. In that she was quite right. She changed her name from Wilson to her mother's name of York, and completed the disguise. Whenever I desired—and oh, sir, I did often desire—to see Ella, my darling, Miss York has always threatened me with the police, and I knew better than to have them on my track, if I could help it. Yes, sir, I see you can't realize it yet, but you'll find Ella Wilson's birth and baptism in the registers of Northfield, and I give you my word it's true.'

"I sat in dumb silence. What could I say? Ella, my Ella, a convict's daughter!

"'Please, sir, don't tell her,' said he. 'She has never known don't let her know. But I felt I must tell you, sir, and you'll not think any worse of her?' and his eyes looked pleadingly and wistfully at me.

"My senses had somewhat returned.

"'No,' I said, 'of course not. I am half dazed, but I feel what you say is true. But Ella is my own now, and always shall be while I live. I wish I had not heard this, but it cannot alter my love for Ella.'

"'Thank God,' he said. 'And, sir, there's one thing more. The doctor says I shall sleep myself away. Do you think it could be managed for my darling to give me one kiss ere I die, just one?'

"'I'll try. Yes,' I said, 'she shall, if you'll leave it to me.'

"'I will! God bless you, Mr. Bourn.'

"I left him. When I got home Ella thought I was ill, and indeed I was. 'Over work,' I pleaded. In another hour they came to tell me he was sleeping, and would not wake in this world.

"I took Ella with me to the hospital. 'Ella,' I said, 'a prisoner who is dying, and who has no—few—friends, told me to day how he had seen you and would like you to kiss him ere he died, as his own daughter would have done. Will you?'

"'Certainly, my darling.'

"And with eyes full of tears she did. The unconscious form rose, the eyelids half opened, the face smiled. She didn't know. Did he?

"I led her away, weeping, my own heart full. I afterwards verified his story. But Ella has never known any more, Howson, and never will. There is sometimes a secret which should not be shared between husband and wife, Howson, isn't there?"

"You're right, dear old Jim," said I as he grasped my hand in silence, but with tear-dimmed eyes. 'You're right, old fellow, and God bless you both!"—Birmingham News.

THE ANTI-SWEARING LEAGUE.

"Hurrah for our side! Three cheers for Hilton High School!" shouted Ray Wilder as he burst into his mother's sitting room one Saturday evening in May.

"Why, Ray! you deafen me. Can't you be a little less noisy, my son?" said his mother. "Moderate your raptures a trifle," said sister Nell, putting her hands to her ears.

"I think baseball is jolly, Ray, and I'm glad your side won. I wish I were a boy instead of a horrid girl. I'd wear long pants and play baseball every Saturday," put in little Julia, who everybody declared, ought to have been a boy, because of her predilection for boyish sports, and her hatred of girl's garments. Every one laughed at Julia's outbreak, while Ray patted her on the head and said: "You would have made a jolly boy, sis, and no mistake," which was sweet praise to the child.

"But, mother," said Ray, more soberly. "I don't like the way the boys swear. They have an oath for everything. They are only about five or six who don't swear, and ladies are coming to these match games. I'm ashamed of the fellows"

"Do you never swear, Ray?" asked Mrs. Wilder, somewhat anxiously.

"Never, mother. None of our crowd does," he answered. Nothing more was said until the sisters had gone to the room for the night and Ray was alone with his mother. "Mother, I want to ask you something. Jim and I talked it over this evening. You know there are all sorts of clubs and societies. Do you think we could have an anti-swearing league?"

"Could you make it a success, Ray" asked his mother."

"Well, momsy, it's this way. You see the boys let me lead mostly—I mean our crowd does. Jim and I think that if the half dozen who don't swear could form a society we might sort o' run things," said Ray.

"How, my son?"

"Well, we would get all the members we could. They can't have any kind of a game without our fellows. We are the best players, and you see if we won't play when there is swearing, there's got to be no swearing, or no game. What do you think, mother?"

"I hardly know yet, Ray. The crusade against swearing is right, but whether you have influence enough to hold your league together is doubtful," answered his mother.

Ray sat thinking a long time. Then as he rose to go to bed he said: "I intend to try, anyway."

Ray was sixteen, large and strong, at the head of the class, and the most popular boy in the school.

He was not a perfect boy by any means. His temper was so violent that his mother dreaded to see it roused, and her daily prayer for Ray was that he might master his firey temper.

He was brave and fearless, and when not provoked to an unreasoning wrath, most persuasive and persistent in accomplishing a purpose. Fortunately for his mates he had most excellent home training, and seldom led his followers wrong. His ability and willingness when aroused to "lick" a boy did not detract from his popularity, as he was usually that boy's best friend afterwards, for Ray was always ashamed and sorry after a fight.

On Monday morning a slip of paper was given to each of "our fellows," calling a meeting after school, in Wilder's barn, to transact "important business."

"Boys," began Ray, "did you notice the swearing at the game Saturday?"

"Yes," said Johnny Benton, "the air was pretty hot out there; smelled of brimstone most of the time."

"I guess father wouldn't let me go any more if he knew how the fellows swear," said Ted Cameron, the minister's son.

"Well, I swore once, but I never wanted to again," put in big George Simpson.

"Why?" asked Jim Gray.

"Dad heard me," said George, at which there was a general shout; for Simpson senior was renowned for his prowess at the end of a rod.

When the laugh subsided Ray spoke again.

"Jim, if I thought you fellows were willing, we'd form an anti swearing league."

"What good would that do? We don't swear," burst in Ted Cameron.

"I don't care who swears so I don't," observed George.

"Jim and I thought," Ray went on, "we might break up the swearing at the ball game. We fellows about run them anyway, and if we refuse to play with the swearers, we might do it. You see we might have a club or society with a constitution and by laws like the men, and take in members and 'blackball,' too. There would be no baseball for the fellows that swear, see?"

"They'd call us Mollies and Susies," said Johnny Benton.

"Let 'em! I'll lick any fellow that calls me Mollie or Susie," and the keen eyes flashed at the thought.

"Well, but, Ray, suppose we fail?" said Ted. "Then they'd laugh and and jeer at us. You know there is a crowd that calls us 'goodies.'"

"Boys," said Ray, and a deep undertone of earnest purpose rang in his voice, "if we determine not to fail, we'll not. I have been ashamed of our school more than once. It is known as the most profane school in the county. There is to be a double match game in June against the Woodside high school. If we begin now we can't fail. We'll not go into this thing thinking 'fail;' but we've got to win or we are Mollies or Susies."

"Hurrah for Ray!" burst out Ted Benton, and the others joined heartily.

Ray's speech carried the day. The The Anti Swearing League was formed with five members.

The crusade against swearing in the Hilton school began then and there. The boy drafted their by laws, and then quietly canvassed for additional members among the better class of boys in the school.

When the members reached fifteen this notice was posted on the door of the high school building:

"Be it hereby understood that we, the undersigned, have formed an Anti-Swearing League for the purpose of stopping swearing at the base ball games.

"Be it further understood, that we will not play base ball with swearers.

"Any boys who will quit swearing can become a member of the league."

Then followed the fifteen names, headed by Ray Wilder's.

Consternation sat on the faces of the "swearers," for this would exclude them from the usual Saturday game.

Some of them bluffed, some of them sulked, while others hastened to sign with mental reservations. But Ray and his friends were on the alert, and when the oath was reported that boy was notified that his absence from the next game would be desirable.

The plan worked so well that it broke up profanity in the Hilton high school.

When the skating and coasting season came on the swearing boy was politely, but firmly, conducted away from the sport,

In the marble season the same rule prevailed.

So popular did the league become, so notorious for the good work accomplished, that other schools formed leagues to prevent profanity.

Ray had a few fights at first, I must confess; but, in controlling others, he learned the necessity of self control; and thus "The Anti-Swearing League" was a means of grace to its founder.—Elizabeth Stine.

SINCERITY INDORSED.

The politician was practicing the gentle art of mingling. He was being as agreeable as possible to everybody he came across and trying to make friends. His tour brought him to the region where he was personally unknown. Like Haroun Al Raschid, he resolved to benefit by the opportunity to hear a few candid expressions with reference to himself and his career. Stopping at a blacksmith shop where some farmers were standing, he engaged one of them in conversation. After a few observations of a general character he said:

"Is Hon. Judson Blank pretty well known around here?"

Without suspecting that the tourist had mentioned his own name, the native answered:

"Yes. Only we don't go ter all that trouble when we speak of 'im. We jes' call him old Jud Blank."

"He's a pretty shrewed statesman, is he not?"

"Wal, he thinks he is," was the answer, with a discouraging accent on the 'he."

It was an embarrassing moment. But the seeker for encouragement pulled himself together and said:

"There's one good quality, however, that I don't believe anybody will deny him."

"Mebbe there is."

"He must be given credit for sincerity."

"Now you've struck it. It was only this mornin' thet I heard a feller givin' him credit fer sincerity."

"Ah? What did he say?"

"He said that mebbe Jud Blank wasn't so much ter blame after all; thet ef he had more sense he'd probably be different."—St. Louis Republic.